

REMARKS


With respect to the Final Office Action dated April 4, 2006, Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 5 and 21-23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,727,940 ("Oka et al."). Furthermore, claims 2-4, 11, 14 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable in view of Oka et al. and/or U.S. Patent No. 6,317,127 ("Daily et al.").

Pursuant to a telephone interview of May 30, 2006, Applicant has amended the independent claims 1, 10, 13 and 15, as suggested by the Examiner, to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references. As a result, the dependent claims 2-7 were also amended to at least maintain proper dependencies. As amended, Applicant submits that the pending claims 1-7, 10-19 and 21-23 are now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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